



## State of Montana Project Management Office

### *Project Concept Phase*

## Critical Success Factors Instructions

The purpose for utilizing this Critical Success Factors Checklist is to ensure that the project's goals have been clearly defined. Clearly defining a project's goals will allow the team and your management to have a level of success at the end of each deliverable, as well as at the end of the project.

The success factors cover areas that project teams may not think are part of their purview; For example, whether product channels and economic business objectives are defined. Although a particular team member generally has responsibility to bring those factors to the table and ensure they are taken into account, those factors may ultimately affect the work and decisions of other team members, so the team having a broader understanding of the big picture is important. This list of factors also brings out the variety of items required for a project to be successful.

The Critical Success Factor Worksheet enables you to ensure your overall management plan and detailed specifications are covering the right areas and to identify items that are worthy of being called out in your Project Charter document.

Those early project documents are intended to help the team identify and agree upon, at a high level, what the project is to produce. They often include a section on "critical success factors" in the sense of identifying items that MUST be present, MUST be met in the project's deliverable, for the project to be successful.

### How to Use This Checklist

1. Review the example checklists.
2. Read the corresponding Critical Success Factors Checklist as a guide for what information should be included for each factor specifically for your project.
3. Fill in each row of the worksheet for your project.
4. Assess what you've written for your project against the criteria from the checklist and note where you feel the project is deficient or missing; i.e. where you have not yet built in the right activities, features, etc., to ensure you'll meet the success criteria.
5. Any item deemed insufficient so far should become the basis of high-priority action items for the team's specification and planning work.

### ***Modifying the Checklist:***

1. Add items particular to your business or your project's ultimate deliverable.

2. If a particular category of success factor applies to your project, but the specific “success definition” words do not, adjust those words as appropriate.

## Example #1: Critical Success Factors Checklist – Product Development Project

- **Understanding user needs:** The product's potential users and customers, and the product's contribution to the customer, are totally understood by the project team.
- **Strategic alignment:** There is alignment of the project with the strategy of the business unit, clear identification of the specific target segment, and a consistent charter in the development organization.
- **Competitive analysis and product superiority:** The competitors' solutions for customer problems are well understood and every effort is made to create a product plan that ensures that the new solution will be better than the competitors' at the time of market launch.
- **Economic business objectives:** Expected results are set in financial terms and related to the trade-offs among scope-resource-schedule in terms of economic impact.
- **Core competency strengths:** Product is based on these, which is important in establishing the ability to differentiate in the marketplace. The competencies can be technology, marketing strength, quality, people knowledge and skills.
- **Product positioning:** The product is positioned correctly, based on an in-depth understanding of users' needs and purchase motivations, in order to provide higher value to the user than competitive products.
- **Regulation compliance:** All regulatory issues in the product's arena are identified and addressed: patent infringement issues, industry standards and approval body regulations, environment, health, ergonomic and globalization issues.
- **Resource availability:** The internal and external resources are available. This deals with recognizing priorities, personnel issues, capital and other practical matters.
- **Priority decision criteria list:** Priority decision criteria are defined before development begins in order to make sound trade-off decisions during development. These decision criteria include the manufacturing cost target, the target time-to-market, key product features, the strategy for extending the technological platform, the reliability goals and the design for manufacturability goals.
- **Risk assessment:** The priority decision criteria list (above) also identifies high-risk areas, including piece-parts, processes, and marketing plans, so that they can be addressed early in the development phase.

- **Product channel and support:** Products have the right channel of distribution and support plan.
- **Project endorsement by upper management:** Upper management knows about the product development effort and provided support.
- **Total organizational support:** Management will provide or is providing adequate financial and human resources from all functions to complete the project as per plan.

## **Other Examples of Critical Success Factors**

### **Performance Criteria**

The team understands which performance specifications are most important to the success of the project.

### **Examples:**

- Transaction processing time for mission-critical applications.
- User load/traffic handling support for web applications.
- Minimum conversion required to realize a profit from a new online feature.
- Minimum leads required for a successful lead generation campaign.
- Maximum number of change orders allowed to receive quality bonus on construction project.

### **Usability**

The team understands the differences in capabilities and needs of its customers and is designing and testing specifically for all user groups the product/service/application must support.

Examples resulting in specification or plan items:

- Maximum number of clicks to accomplish particular operations in an application.
- Online help creation required, operations to be covered at what level.
- Required user documentation specific to each customer group.

### **Level of Service**

The customer/user base is understood such that the team knows how much and what kinds of support must be provided to meet any Service Level Agreements or particular

quantitative or qualitative ‘customer satisfaction’ goals, and the project includes activities to put that support in place in time for deployment.

### **Examples**

- Help desk support turnaround and staffing required to adequately service users.
- Required user documentation.

## **Administrative Information**

Revision	Author	Date	Sections Affected	Change Summary
1.0		1/2/2009		

Current Version	1.0
Date	1/2/2009
Master Document Chapter Number	3
Document ID	10